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## **Achieving High Performance in Library Work**

### **ABSTRACT**

In this article, the concept of productivity is recast. This is necessary because the nature of work is undergoing a profound transformation. As a result, corporate and political leaders are seeking to build an institutional framework in which excellence and high performance are adopted as basic cultural norms. To be successful in this effort, leaders must create a new reality for the employee. This must include a high quality of work life.

Discussion of a set of critical human resource issues may help to provide a platform from which to refocus personnel administration as it is currently practiced in our nation's libraries. These issues are: motivation; job design; quality of work life; organizational culture; high performance; and excellence and renewal.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a particularly vivid scene from one of his classic C-rated movies, Victor Mature sits idly, chained to an oar. A new sound is heard, the slow beat of a drum. Each of the slaves picks up the beat with his oar and the warship moves forward. Suddenly an alarm is given. "Enemy ahead!" The drum beats faster and the slaves row faster. Some fall to the deck only to be whipped back into place. The individual beats of the drum blend together and the movements of the slaves become feverish, almost chaotic.

The slaves have but one task, to row to the beat of the drum. The design of their jobs is elemental. They have no control. There is no place

for creativity or initiative. Their decision-making alternatives are two-fold: row or be whipped.

In a purposefully exaggerated sense, these slaves are simply tools for production. Their value can be measured by the single criterion of speed. Unfortunately, the message of productivity—i.e., as doing something faster—is not limited to old movies. Much of management thought since the Industrial Revolution has focused on the employee working faster.

Within our profession we often find “productivity” rated first—or second after quality—on performance review forms. The primary question is, Does the individual produce an acceptable amount of work?

One of the ironies of contemporary life in the United States is that the need for faster work is critical. Yet for America’s workers the meaning of the word “productivity” has often been debased by a historical, single-minded pursuit that ignored and even rejected the needs of the worker for a reasonable quality of work life. Rights were generally reserved for management. The rights of workers were twofold: stay or leave. This certainly was a big advantage over the choices available to Victor Mature and his fellow slaves.

In this article the concept of productivity is cast into a broader framework. This is necessary because the nature of work and its corresponding performance requisites are undergoing profound changes. As a result, corporate and political leaders are examining means to create a society that strives for excellence and high performance as basic cultural norms. To be successful in achieving these goals, leaders must likewise create a new reality for the employee. This must include a high quality of work life.

A discussion of these critical human resource issues may help to provide a platform from which to refocus personnel administration as it is currently practiced in our nation’s libraries. These issues are: motivation; job design; quality of work life (QWL); organizational culture; high performance; and excellence and renewal.

## MOTIVATION

In a recent survey of the terms most often entered by the users of InfoTrac, “employee motivation” placed thirty-fifth. No other personnel-related term appeared among the top fifty (Higgins, et al., 1987, p. 5). An analysis of the most requested *Harvard Business Review* reprints reveals that ten out of the top twelve are on the subject of motivation. These examples provide evidence of the considerable interest in motivation (Herzberg, 1987, pp. 109-17).

Unfortunately, the concept of motivation, like that of productivity, is frequently misused. Many managers believe that motivation is an external force to be applied to the employee. This view is often expressed in terms such as, I motivate my staff to work hard. Most researchers,

however, view motivation as an internal force that “energizes, directs, or sustains behavior” (Steers et al., 1975, p. 6).

Because the motivational state of the employee is probably the most critical element in achieving excellence, an understanding of some of the major theories of motivation should prove helpful to the reader (Hinrichs, 1976). These theories of motivation (see Figure 1) fall into three categories or a combination of these categories: (1) the individual, (2) the job, and (3) the work environment.

### *Characteristics of the Individual*

Abraham Maslow (1954) found that before an individual strives for higher level psychological needs such as self-esteem or self-actualization (what a man can be, he must be), he/she must meet basic lower level physiological, safety, and belongingness needs. This means that the energizing forces of motivation would usually unfold in stages.

Those with a high need for self-actualization—often the best performers—are motivated by an internal drive to use their capacities to the fullest. Maslow refers to “capacities clamoring to be used which cease their clamor only when they are used sufficiently” (Garfield, 1986, p. 60).

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<i>Category 1</i>	Characteristics of the Individual What employee brings to work situation	<i>Maslow</i> Need Hierarchy Theory <i>McClelland</i> Achievement Motivation Theory
<i>Category 2</i>	Characteristics of the Job What employee does at work	<i>Herzberg</i> Motivation—Hygiene Theory
<i>Category 3</i>	Characteristics of the Work Environment What happens to the employee at work	Working Conditions, Salary, & Interpersonal Relations
<i>Category 4</i>	Interaction between Individual and the Work Environment	<i>Adams</i> Equity Theory <i>Steers &amp; Porter</i> Expectancy/Valence Theory

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Figure 1. Theories of motivation

David McClelland (1976) studied the achievement orientation of individuals. Those with a strong need for achievement have high standards of excellence and are very goal-directed. They take responsibility for finding solutions to problems. They set moderate achievement goals and take calculated risks. They also want concrete feedback as to how well they are doing.

### *Characteristics of the Job*

Frederick Herzberg (1966) did not focus on the individual. Instead, he found that the individual acquires a sense of self-actualization, achievement, and meaning from the job itself and not from the context of work, the work environment, or from what an individual brings to the job.

Herzberg described two sets of key factors: hygiene factors (job context) and motivating factors (job content). The hygiene factors include company policy, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security. An employee would not experience long-term satisfaction from favorable hygiene factors, but unfavorable hygiene factors would lead to long-term dissatisfaction.

Motivating factors include achievement, responsibility, recognition, advancement, and growth. Herzberg believed that an employee would be more highly motivated over the long-term if his/her job had positive motivating factors. This approach led Herzberg to emphasize the design of jobs, an area in which he has been extremely influential. This aspect of his work will be discussed later.

Herzberg's (1968) article, "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?" is the number one *Harvard Business Review* reprint. More than 1,200,000 copies have been requested.

### *Characteristics of the Work Environment*

During the 1800s and early 1900s there was little interest in the subject of work motivation. Work conditions were often deplorable, but there were few constraints on the employer. A Fall River mill worker provides this graphic description of her work situation:

At first the noise is fierce, and you have to breathe the cotton all the time, but you get used to it. Lots of us is deaf—weavers—that's one reason I couldn't get that second girl place. The lady said I couldn't hear the door bell if it would ring, but you never think of the noise after the first, in the mill. Only it's bad one way: when the bobbins flies out and a girl gets hurt, you can't hear her shout....She's got to wait till you see her. (Barnum, 1971, p. 27)

As the social conscience shifted and as a new managerial class emerged, concern about the negative effects of poor working conditions on employees and their levels of motivation became a significant social issue. This interest lessened in the 1930s and 1940s as experts looked more closely at group dynamics and the psychology of the worker (Sundstrom, 1986, p. 62). Lately, however, there has been renewed interest in what happens to the employee at work. Figure 2 depicts a

variety of conditions that affect work—e.g., lighting, climate, and the ergonomics of the workplace. These conditions may influence the amount of worker satisfaction and work outcomes.

As an example, many library employees have begun to complain about the eye strain, headaches, and back strain that they are experiencing because of their work on computer terminals. This has become a significant problem. On the one hand, the problem can be cured easily with the appropriate equipment and scheduling. On the other hand, some managers turn a deaf ear to such concerns.

Likewise, the potential stressful situations that might arise from electronic supervision are not always acknowledged. The Computer and Business Equipment Manufacturers Association (CBEMA) in its *Industry News* points to the benefits of this type of monitoring. The CBEMA does not acknowledge, nor has it seen any research proving, that computer monitoring may produce undue stress (Computer & Business Equipment Manufacturers Assn., 1987).

*Interaction of the Individual and the Work Environment.* In his article, "Inequity in Social Exchange," J. Stacy Adams (1965) states that "inequity exists for Person whenever he perceives that the ratio of his outcomes to inputs and the ratio of Other's outcomes to Other's inputs

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Noise	Work Content	
Lighting	Autonomy	
Temperature	Chance for Advancement	
Color	Peer Relations	
Air Quality	Physical Environment	Job Satisfaction
Equipment	Job Security	
Privacy	Salary	
Status Symbols	Company Policies	
	Supervision	

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Adapted from Eric Sundstrom. (1986). *Work places: The psychology of the physical environment in offices and factories*. New York: Cambridge University Press (p. 80).

Figure 2. Work environment and job satisfaction

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are unequal." The existence of an inequity creates a tension which the individual handles by: (1) altering his inputs and outcomes, (2) distorting his inputs and outcomes cognitively, (3) leaving the field, (4) acting on other, and (5) changing the object of his comparisons.

Positive inputs may relate to variables such as age, sex, ethnicity, and education. Positive outcomes include rewards intrinsic to the job, satisfying supervision, and benefits. Negative outcomes include poor working conditions, monotony, and several of Herzberg's dissatisfiers.

Expectancy/valence theory focuses on the relationships among inputs—the interaction between the individual and the work environment—rather than on the inputs themselves. The major inputs, or the determinants of performance in the organizational setting, are motivational levels, abilities and traits, and role clarity (Steers & Porter, 1975, pp. 180-86). "This theory argues that motivational force to perform—or effort—is a multiplicative function of the expectancies, or beliefs, that individuals have concerning future outcomes *times* the value they place on those outcomes (Steers & Porter, 1975, p. 181).

### *Summary*

The subject of employee motivation is extremely complex. Furthermore, despite all the research that has been conducted and the thousands of articles that have been written, the various theories fail to complement one another. Rather, they seem to confound one another. This makes it very difficult to synthesize findings from the literature and from practice so as to have something of solid, pragmatic value.

Because of the importance of this issue, however, guidelines or hints for action need to be offered. Some hints may be easier to make than others. Recently, while in the staff room, an employee was overheard repeating aloud the title of an article she was reading, "How Do You Raise Your Self-esteem?" Quick as a flash, I replied: "Climb a ladder!" There was a certain amount of satisfaction with this retort, but this humorous advice had little value to others. This is often true of the statements of many of those in the "motivation" advice business.

Self-esteem is serious business. The California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility has a budget of \$245,000 a year for three years, courtesy of taxpayers. Its charge is to explore the relationship between low self-esteem and major social ills. One member, Jack Canfield, says: "My work in education is all about self-esteem" (Matthews, 1988, A-1, p. 22).

As was noted earlier, the people who usually provide motivational advice—this group may occasionally include academic researchers—are always inventing something new. Meanwhile, in real life situations, we are searching frantically for practical solutions. The best advice is to treat your employees with respect and provide them with meaningful work; include an opportunity for them to discover and use an inner drive to make a contribution and to find recognition for their efforts.

## DESIGN OF WORK

Herzberg writes that the simplest and easiest way to get something done is to ask somebody. He finds that employers typically did not deal with employees in this way. Instead, they use a kick in the pants. Herzberg also believes that people should not associate movement with motivation. Motivation comes from within; it is not imposed externally. Management's role is to set the conditions by which the internal motivation of the employee may be energized and sustained (Herzberg, 1987, pp. 109-20). Edwin Locke (1970) writes:

A supervisor can help fulfill an employee's desires but he cannot provide him with desires; he can offer him new knowledge or the chance to gain new knowledge but he cannot force him to learn; he can assign goals to a worker but he cannot compel him to accept those goals.

In libraries we may want employees to make a greater personal investment, but we must also work together to establish a balanced organizational investment. This investment should include work that is designed to: (1) bring out the best qualities in our employees, (2) have a high quality of work life, and (3) encourage the pursuit of excellence within a high performance organizational culture.

Historically we have not taken this approach. People have often been treated as tools or as extensions of machines. This led managers to ignore the unique characteristics of the individual employee. Frederick Taylor saw that this practice was dysfunctional in several ways. For example, it overlooked the physiological differences between employees. He was able to demonstrate successfully that a tall worker with a short-handled shovel was not likely to be as productive as a tall worker with a long-handled shovel. With this insight Taylor began to design tools that were the right size and weight for typical categories of employees. The customizing of tools for the worker had a dramatic impact and fostered the emergence of the science of ergonomics.

Despite the genuine improvement in working conditions, the psychological makeup of employees remained generally irrelevant until the 1930s. The attitude that employees are mere instruments still has many adherents although there is increasing recognition of the intrinsic value of human resources.

The effective design of jobs can elicit higher levels of employee motivation. This usually has a positive effect on satisfaction and performance. In this section, several forms of job design will be discussed briefly. Readers are referred to other material that the author has written on this subject. J. Richard Hackman's (1975) job enrichment model will also be described.

Flex-time, work simplification, job rotation, and job sharing are four of the most common types of job change. These changes affect either the context of the job, or, in the case of work simplification, make the job easier and less challenging. Their motivating potential is weak at best (Martell, 1981; Martell, 1983, pp. 43-65).

Another common job change strategy is to add tasks or to increase the variety of tasks. This is called job enlargement. Herzberg (1987) called it the enlargement of meaningfulness.

To make a job meaningful it is necessary to add five core job dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Hackman, 1975, pp 57-71). If this is done, the employee is able to experience three critical psychological states: meaningfulness of the work, responsibility for outcomes of work, and knowledge of the actual results of the work activity. By designing work in this direction, the self-esteem and self-actualization of employees often increase dramatically.

Core job dimensions and critical psychological states are factors in Hackman's (1975, pp. 57-71) job enrichment model. In this sense, job enrichment is the process by which a person gains greater control over the factors that directly affect his/her job (Martell & Untawale, 1983).

- Scheduling*: when you do what during the day;
- Decision-making*: meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect your tasks, your job, and your role within the library;
- Meaning*: who does your work help and how important does it seem to you; and
- Feedback*: the information that you receive on how your efforts contribute to the goals of your unit, the library, and, most importantly, users.

What must you change? Hackman (1975) suggests that you: combine tasks; form natural work units; establish client relationships; add autonomy; and open feedback channels (pp. 42-44). By making these changes you will increase the levels of motivation and satisfaction, achieve higher work quality, and lower absenteeism and turnover (Yorks, 1976).

The rationale behind some of these suggested changes may need an explanation. For example, why is *establish client relationships* included? Quite simply, an organizational structure that is formed around clients would tend to place as many librarians as possible in a direct relationship with the clients. Combined with autonomy and the implicit control and decision-making authority that results, the source of the librarian's satisfaction or dissatisfaction is focused not on management but on the client or library user (Herzberg, 1987, p. 120).

To achieve, sustain, and expand one's excellence, it is necessary to know how you are doing on a continuous basis. This explains why *feedback* is such a critical job design factor. In librarianship the library is usually structured around function and rarely, if ever, around client. Also feedback is normally provided during retention, promotion, and tenure cycles. Rarely do librarians receive direct and objective—i.e., unbiased—feedback on the quality, effectiveness, and performance characteristics of their (1) lectures or other types of library instruction presentations, (2) online search skills, (3) collection development expertise, (4) reference skills, and (5) committee work.



Within the profession there are few librarians who know anything about job design techniques and even fewer who have practiced these techniques. This is a serious problem if the profession is to make excellence and high performance one of its norms in not only a symbolic sense but also in a strict pragmatic sense. To do so will be difficult. First, there are the design techniques that must be learned and implemented. Second, there are the norms in our professional culture that must be modified. A few issues related to the former will be discussed here. Organizational culture will be discussed in a later section.

A job is made up of multiple tasks. To redesign the job of even one employee can be complicated. The situation becomes more complex when one realizes that the concept of job is limited in comparison to the concept of organizational role. Librarians, for example, have roles that frequently include librarywide and campus assignments, creative and scholarly activity, community service, professional service, and personal development.

A library has several levels. It may be necessary to redesign more than one job in a unit in order to bring overall relationships and roles into a reasonable symmetry. To move beyond one unit will require the cooperation of additional supervisors and employees. Larger organizational issues may also come into play as the scale of a redesign effort is expanded.

Change efforts are complicated by the fact that organizations have multiple levels: task, job, unit, department, division, and the library as a whole. For example, to redesign one job in one unit takes both a lot of work and a very knowledgeable librarian. Such a librarian might be able to redesign the work of all employees in his/her department. However, the very success of this effort might lead other department heads to feel challenged or even threatened. Frequently, over time, the innovative department is forced to retrench and the innovation fails. It has been demonstrated that in order to provide a supportive climate for work redesign, organizational values throughout the library must be favorable and congruent.

The problem of expanding from the design or redesign of one job to multiple jobs or units led to the development of more sophisticated concepts and techniques for improving the effectiveness of work through job design. One of the most popular terms is work systems design. The term is broad enough to encompass a total organizational-wide job/role change effort. At this point, it is time to call in a consultant and ask for advice. The complexity is beyond the scope of this article. Large-scale changes have been reported in the literature and may interest some readers (Ford, 1979; Glaser, 1976; Katzell et al., 1977; Walton, 1979).

### *Quality of Work Life*

If libraries are to make important strides forward, library employees must be willing to make significant personal investments in

this effort. Their willingness to do so is strengthened if libraries accept corresponding obligations. Guarantees of a high quality of work life represent one such form of investment.

### *QWL Definition*

One popular definition of quality of work life is: "the degree to which members of the work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experience in the organization (Suttle, 1977, p. 4). These personal needs can be satisfied through the design of jobs that include six major QWL characteristics: autonomy; challenge; expression of creativity; opportunity for learning; participation in decision-making; and use of a variety of valued skills and abilities.

### *QWL Predictors*

From the answers to a survey asking: "What aspects of working life do organizational members consider important?" Mark Levine et al. (1986) compiled seven predictors of QWL:

- challenge in my work;
- degree to which my superiors treat me with respect and have confidence in my abilities;
- extent to which my life outside of work affects my life at work;
- extent to which the work I do contributes to society;
- self esteem;
- variety in my daily work routine; and
- work at present leads to good future work opportunities.

Library employees, who respond positively to these predictors, are likely to have a high QWL and are most likely to support new policy, service, and performance initiatives (Martell, 1985; Martell & Creth, 1984; Martell & Kunselman, 1984; Martell & Holbrook, 1984; Martell & Swanson, 1984; Martell & Tyson, 1985; Martell & Gorman, 1983; Martell, 1983a; Martell & Johnson, 1983).

Any discussion of QWL in libraries must make a clear distinction between librarians and other staff. The professional model that covers librarians parallels the QWL model and its attributes; however, staff are not the beneficiaries. A two-part (professional-staff) strategy is therefore necessary for achieving high performance in library work.

Some very thorny questions arise here. For example, is QWL appropriate for some employees but not for others—e.g., for librarians but not for other staff? If some QWL approaches advocate lowered status differentials among employees—e.g., participation by all staff in decision-making—will some librarians reject QWL? Or the definition of QWL is stated in terms of what the employee needs. What about the organization's needs? (In the following sections there will be some clarification of what the organization needs.)

A case could be made that, in general, many librarians already have a high QWL, especially if compared to workers in other sectors of the

U.S. economy. If so, have they responded by demonstrating significantly higher performance norms, or a closer orientation to the client in the sense implied by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman (1982), the authors of *In Search of Excellence*, and others? Would researchers or social commentators identify librarians or libraries as having the strong competitive dynamic typical of excellent organizations?

In the 1960s, a number of articles described the underutilization of librarians. It was difficult to understand how this situation might exist in a "healthy" profession, one that, at least in theory, espoused high levels of autonomy and personal control. Today, it is apparent that librarians are not underutilized, but they may be poorly utilized. Whatever the exact condition of the profession in terms of degree of utilization, many would agree that dramatic, perhaps profound, changes are underway. In "EIDOS and the Transformation of Libraries," Frederick Kilgour (1987) states:

By the end of the century, however, librarians, even though they surely will not have discarded bibliography and its associated printed materials, will be well out "beyond bibliography," [sic] and the focus of their professional concern will be to treat each user as an individual even to the extent of supplying them with information before they seek it. (pp. 46-49)

Being close to the client is one of eight prescriptive characteristics of excellent organizations according to Peters and Waterman (1982). To become excellent it is necessary to be responsive. This means the continuous monitoring of the external environment: (1) to learn about changes in the client's needs, and (2) to develop new programs and services in response to these changes (Hearn & Heydinger, 1985). However, the organizational structure of libraries and professional norms limit severely the degree to which libraries can and have been responsive to clients' (users') needs (Martell, 1983b).

Therefore, even if QWL becomes an institutional norm, there is little reason to believe that professional norms, or other relevant norms, would change as a direct result. What is still needed is the creation of a library culture that has among its basic norms: high performance; responsive, client-driven services and programs; a strong tendency toward innovation; and an urge to excel.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The culture of an organization consists of the learned behaviors and shared meanings of its members and their transmission to new members. After the first day of practice with his new team, the Seattle Seahawks' Brian Bosworth, former All-American linebacker from the University of Oklahoma, spoke to reporters about professional football's acculturation process. "It's more finesse out here for some reason. At Oklahoma, we were programmed all the time to bite the hell out of people" (Associated Press, 1987a, p. C-13).

In libraries there is rarely any talk of a "bite the hell out of people"

philosophy. The profession's competitive energies lean toward finesse. To achieve excellence, however, librarianship may need a competitive drive that is more analogous to business and sports than to its traditional heritage.

As an example, librarians rarely use the word "productivity" except in its most pejorative sense. To talk about the number of books cataloged per hour by a cataloger is to move outside of accepted professional norms. The concept is not accepted culturally. There have been discussions about standards, but these relate to what should be done and how, not to how many. Also, in the area of reference, librarians avoid through various forms and strategies any effort to determine the quality of reference service.

Curiously, reference librarians measure quantity (how many questions they receive per hour), but not quality (how effectively these questions are answered), while catalogers measure quality (how well the books cataloged conform to relevant standards), but not quantity (how many books they catalog per hour).

In "Finding the Culture of Productivity," Gib Akin and David Hopelain (1986) show that the most productive employees do what no one else thinks is possible, things you wouldn't expect. These employees have internal levels of initiative and excellence that are not taught to them by others in the same situation. Other elements in a productive environment include: effective teamwork; identification with the job; results oriented; support for accomplishment; using skills autonomously; and willingness to work hard.

An examination of the culture of libraries is necessary to determine if it matches society's requirements and those of users. To improve this culture, librarians may have to go to the user's place of work and determine what the user needs and how the library can be responsive to these needs.

Each of us is going to have some variation in perspective about the pressing issues facing libraries and the practical responses that need to be undertaken. Building a more productive culture is but one of the cultural changes that appear necessary. Other changes in culture would lead the profession to encourage and facilitate creativity, risk-taking, experimentation, and entrepreneurship.

Many supervisors, including library supervisors, have a strong need to know exactly what is going on at all times. To accomplish this they may establish restrictive, often subtle, controls about what is considered appropriate staff behavior (Feldman, 1985; Martell, 1987). This orientation may lead them to react negatively to employee initiatives.

Recently, after a presentation on motivation and excellence, a library manager in the audience asked about how to handle a perplexing situation that she had faced. "In my department we were discussing some basic technical processing routines when a staff member made some observations that we thought were creative. I really wonder



whether or not we should take these kinds of risks." This author was taken aback. The level of risks that we normally face in libraries is minor. To think that a library employee is at risk with her colleagues because she offers a creative approach is foreboding.

Still, many of us face related perplexing situations. For example, in some libraries resources are so tight that each decision takes on added meaning. There is too little opportunity to experiment. This particular year, in the library budget at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), there was no money budgeted for projects. Indeed, as a manager it may seem necessary to be overly careful in a fiscal sense at the very time that experimentation and risk-taking are required in order to take advantage of new opportunities.

If libraries are to be key players in the so-called knowledge industry, administrators, librarians, and staff must discover within themselves new sources of creativity and motivation. Finding these new sources runs parallel to efforts at the national level. Indeed, one reason for the deep interest in the issues of creativity and motivation, as well as excellence and productivity, is the serious deterioration in the competitive position of the United States. A lowered standard of living might result. This nation's libraries and the profession of librarianship would suffer enormously.

## HIGH PERFORMANCE

What do we want our employees to do? If the answer is to produce more, then productivity is the key issue. If we want high quality, then quality control may be the most important issue. If the decision is made to emphasize excellence, then a more sophisticated framework would be most helpful.

First, there are basic (productivity) factors—how many, how fast, how good. Second, there are intermediate (performance) factors—how efficient, how effective. Finally, there are advanced (excellence) factors. The advanced factors relate to the basic mission of the library. They place the library within an encompassing social context. This context includes: the social utility of the library as an institution; the degree to which the library enhances our democratic processes and the skills and aptitudes of our population; the benefits of the library to the process of scholarly communication; and the contribution of the library to the creation and application of knowledge.

At an EDUCOM workshop during the national conference in Los Angeles (October 1987), a speaker who is on the faculty at a prestigious library school defined libraries as if they were solely collections of things. In his view, the role of librarians is to provide bibliographic access to library collections. This viewpoint is not unique. It places an instrumental value on human resources—i.e., as the extension of a tool—the collection.

This historical perspective is also grounded in the culture of the



library profession itself. There is sufficient evidence to support the belief that most librarians would put their personal value in second place after the collections in their libraries. This attitude distorts the "true" value of libraries to society. We have also adopted a set of cultural norms that limits our ability to see objectively another reality (or realities) that holds greater promise for the future of libraries.

A relatively crude analogy may help to put this abstract concept into focus. Assume that how the profession treats the collection is analogous to how Detroit treats the automobile: "make the item (book or automobile) available to a user/customer." What is missing in the Detroit approach? It ignores:

- impact of cost of purchase on customer—e.g., monthly payments, car insurance, reduction in savings rate;
- maintenance costs to be absorbed by user;
- purpose of use—e.g., family car, dune buggy, cheap used car for student;
- safety of the car—e.g., child locks, emergency braking distance;
- pollution controls;
- gasoline consumption;
- comfort and other ergonomics;
- appropriateness of tires for environmental conditions; and
- satisfaction factors.

In addition to the multiple impacts that the purchase and use of the automobile have on the user, it is obvious that there are significant social issues—i.e., the energy dependency of the United States, air quality, health care, quality of life, employment rates in the industry, state of the Gross National Product, and trade balances.

Library collections serve purposes that are equally as varied and frequently as meaningful. Service practices and their conceptual underpinnings, however, have a low value-added ratio in comparison to potential approaches.

High performance is an important need in many organizations. Performance in one sense relates not so much to efficiency or how fast somebody did something, but to effectiveness or the degree to which the work performed allows the organization to achieve its goals. However, as Rosemary DuMont (1980) suggests, librarians have had difficulty defining organizational effectiveness because they have not been able to define library goals in a satisfactory manner.

High performance means working harder, but it also means to work smarter and better. Many librarians work hard already. Many don't have much more to give. Library managers need to discover new paths, and because they are unlikely to get new resources, managers must find innovative ways to shift human resources within a consensual framework. Arie P. DeGeus (1988) calls for institutional learning—"the process whereby management teams change their shared mental models of their company, their markets, and their competitors."

Presently, many employees worry when management starts talking about something new. A discussion with management today may lead to a perceived wild-eyed scheme to add a new workload on top of an already burdened staff with the commitment of already overcommitted resources. Also, who will do the work? Not management!

In trying to build a collaborative but high performance work environment, managers must adopt more advanced attitudes about their primary resource, people (Alcott, 1987, p. E-1). Recent studies have shown that workers are generally happy with their jobs, but they are not happy with management. Of employees in one study, 53 percent were satisfied with salaries. Other favorable ratings were: benefits (61 percent satisfied), physical environment (61 percent satisfied), job satisfaction (70 percent satisfied). However, as regards management treatment, only 39 percent were satisfied. Obviously many employees hold critical attitudes toward their supervisors/managers (Associated Press, 1987b, p. D-2; Goleman, 1987, p. D-1-21).

An understanding of what factors create satisfaction or stress for the employee can assist efforts to progress toward higher levels of performance. Charles Bunge (1987) reports that patrons were the main source of stress among the librarians that he studied. Patrons were also the main source of satisfaction. Support staff reported that their main source of stress was supervision. Relations with other colleagues were another major source of stress for the support staff. Support staff may have higher needs for affiliation to offset the lack of recognition and autonomy that are associated with their positions.

Because monetary rewards are limited, it becomes more necessary to create challenging work so that the intrinsic needs of the employee are recognized and met more clearly. Each employee should establish a set of high performance goals. Once this is completed, the appropriateness of the goals should be reviewed. Keith Bell (1983) suggests that we ask ourselves the following questions:

- Are my goals realistic?
- What are the odds of my reaching my goals?
- Are my goals measurable?
- Is the payoff worth the price?
- Have I outlined a likely road to success?
- How much control do I have over reaching my goals?
- What are the opportunities that exist?
- Are there other ways of reaching my goals? (pp. 78-79)

Measuring attainment or progress toward goals is an important characteristic of sports. Sports figures know when they have done something well: they win or lose. Librarians and other staff need to develop similar benchmarks if high performance is to become a cultural norm.

In many roles, personal achievement is the result of excellent teamwork. Managerial success is predicated on the teamwork of others. For this reason managers must have a clear sense of their role (Tichy & Devanna, 1986). A clear role definition is the first prerequisite for the

development of a well-constructed set of personal goals. Richard Steers and Lyman Porter (1975) state that each manager should:

- Take an active role in managing motivation processes at work—through conscious, intentional behavior.
- Be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses and your role in the organization.
- Increase your sensitivity to variations in employees' needs, abilities and traits.
- Be able to identify superior performers and reward them.
- Improve job and role clarity of your staff.
- Increase the amount of attention paid to the quality of the work environment, including group dynamics and organizational climate.
- Assess the attitudes of your staff on a continual basis as a motivational barometer.
- Allow employees to participate more fully in processes aimed at attaining organizational effectiveness. (pp. 558-59)

In summary, the roles of librarians and libraries are narrow when one views the profession from a knowledge society perspective. Achieving high performance in the context of this article implies both a major shift in the nature of library work and in the performance characteristics of the profession (Zuboff, 1985; Strassmann, 1985; Hirschhorn, 1984; Beniger, 1986). The need for structural changes in the profession mirrors a national outcry about the structure and activity of our economy. For example, Lester Thurow and others have recently written books on the reindustrialization of America (Thurow, 1985; Bowles, et al., 1983; Wachter & Wachter, 1984). They are developing new concepts about how the nation's economic resources should be deployed and managed.

## EXCELLENCE AND RENEWAL

The profession of librarianship is at a crossroad. It has the potential to adopt a far different, more proactive service orientation than we have in the past. Also, the new technologies offer some very interesting possibilities—e.g., compact discs and data files. This is a historic juncture. However, the various technologies often intersect with one another and create a confusing pattern.

In "Corporate Leadership Skills: A New Synthesis," Richard Byrd (1987) lists several formerly popular terms for describing leadership styles—e.g., Theory X and Theory Y, Theory Z, Beyond Theory Z, the Blake and Mouton managerial grid, and Likert's System 4 manager. Every few years there is a new theory to grab onto.

Byrd (1987) avoids the tendency to create his own theory but he does describe several skills that are necessary for those who wish to exert a leadership role:

- Anticipatory Skills*—An effective leader intuitively and systematically scans the environment for potential areas of exposure to new historical risks.
- Visioning Skills*—The skills associated with visioning entail creating mental and verbal pictures of desirable future states, persisting and persevering, and sharing and creating a new reality with others.
- Value-Congruence Skills*—Corporate leaders must be in touch with their employees' psychological, economic, safety, spiritual, sexual, aesthetic, and

physical needs. In this way, they can engage employees on the basis of shared motives, values, and goals.

- Empowerment Skills*—The skills associated with empowerment entail being willing to share power; taking delight in others' development more than in having control; and realizing that visions are achieved by teams, not by single leaders.
- Self-Understanding Skills*—[These] skills entail being willing to search for personal identity and growth, appreciating that personal ego strength is a requirement for leading, being open to feedback and other performance data, and having a frame of reference by which to understand and arouse motivation.

With the realization of these skills it will be possible to say, as does Tom Peters (1988) in "Traditional Management Notions Take a Brutal Beating," "the for-so-long comfortable world of management practice has truly been turned upside down" (p. E-2). Tom Peters was also one of the authors of *In Search of Excellence*. The other was Robert Waterman (1987a) who recently completed a new book *The Renewal Factor*. In it he recommends that change be adopted as the basis for all of our activity.

Waterman is especially interested in what makes an organization excellent. He found that goal-directedness is a key factor in high performance. Renewing companies:

Turn tedious issues into a noble cause....They do so in ways that enhance the dignity of the people they employ.

Porsche CEO Peter Schultz brings the point to life with this story: "Three people were at work on a construction site. All were doing the same job, but when each was asked what his job was, the answers varied. 'Breaking rocks,' the first replied. 'Earning my living,' said the second. 'Helping to build a cathedral,' said the third."

Few of us can build cathedrals. But to the extent we can see the cathedral in whatever cause we are following, the job seems more worthwhile. (Waterman, 1987b, p. 120)

In libraries we often think of our roles as checking out books and answering reference questions. Yet we have a cathedral of knowledge in our institutions. We need to orient services to unlock that knowledge for patrons. This gives us a real challenge, a challenge that requires the highest levels of performance, excellence, and renewal (Gardner, 1984).

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